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2.0 MONITORING

2.1 Definition

Monitoring involves the collection of environmental information (including data and statistics of both qualitative and quantitative nature) and the analysis and interpretation of that information. Monitoring is performed for the purposes of assessing conditions and trends in the environment, for developing and implementing a review of policy directions and providing guidance for the allocation of natural resources. Monitoring is also essential in providing an important means of feedback and review.

2.2 Requirements for Monitoring

As a Unitary Authority, Gisborne District Council has the functions of both a Territorial Authority and Regional Council. The requirement for monitoring under each of these functions must be met by Council. These specific requirements include the duty to gather information, monitor and keep records under Section 35 of the Act and to make this information available to members of the public. Section 35 states:

- "(1) Every local authority shall gather such information, and undertake or commission such research, as is necessary to carry out effectively its functions under this Act.*
- (2) Every local authority shall monitor -*
- (a) The state of the whole or any part of the environment of its region or district to the extent that is appropriate to enable the local authority to effectively carry out its functions under this Act; and*
 - (b) The suitability and effectiveness of any policy statement or plan for its region or district; and*
 - (c) The exercise of any functions, powers, or duties delegated or transferred by it; and*
 - (d) The exercise of the resource consents that have effect in its region or district, as the case may be, -*

and take appropriate action (having regard to the methods available to it under this Act) where this is shown to be necessary."

In addition to these general requirements, Gisborne District Council also must state within any Regional and District Plans produced, the procedures to be used to review the matters set out in paragraphs (a) to (h) of Section 67 and 75 respectively and to monitor the effectiveness of the plan as a means of achieving its objectives and policies. If requested, any local authority must also supply information requested by the Minister for the Environment in relation to the exercise or performance of any of the local authority's functions, powers, or duties under the Act (Section 27). Information collected for monitoring purposes will assist in this area also.

Under these requirements a range of types of monitoring must be performed. These include:

- monitoring the environment to enable the local authority to effectively carry out its functions under the Act (state of the environment monitoring); and
- the suitability and effectiveness of any policy statement or plan, and exercise of transferred powers (performance monitoring); and
- the monitoring of exercise of resource consents (compliance and impact monitoring).

2.3 Types of Monitoring

Monitoring covers a range of parameters and as such will be undertaken using a variety of mechanisms.

2.3.1 State of the Environment Monitoring

State of the Environment monitoring assesses the environmental health of natural and physical resources which the council is managing under the Act. It is essential to detect any change in the District's resources and this will indicate to what extent the Plan is achieving anticipated environmental results. The emergence of new issues can also be identified and defined through this form of monitoring.

State of the environment monitoring may be performed using a range of parameters depending on the resource which is being monitored. Much of this information will be collected as a requirement under Section 35 (the need to keep records to enable the authority to effectively carry out its functions). State of the environment monitoring will include people and associated social, economic and cultural conditions. Monitoring of these aspects of the environment may be performed as a reflection of Council's wider responsibilities (as under the Local Government Act). State of the environment information may be gained from research undertaken or commissioned by Council, utilising research undertaken by other organisations working in similar areas (for example DOC and Fish and Game Council), or other organisations such as Statistics New Zealand.

2.3.2 Performance Monitoring

Performance monitoring involves assessing the suitability and effectiveness of the Plan as well as the exercise of any functions, powers or duties delegated or transferred by the authority. The use of performance monitoring will assist in the review of the plan and influence any subsequent changes made.

2.3.3 Compliance and Impact Monitoring

Compliance and impact monitoring involves the analysis of compliance with consent conditions and rules of the plan and the affect that these activities are having on the environment. Compliance monitoring is an ongoing process which involves assessing both the public and resource consent applicants actions. Monitoring may be in the form of a formalised review of a selected range of consents or be in response to complaints by members of the public. Impact monitoring is typically carried out in a more targeted manner on activities which are identified as requiring closer monitoring of their effect on the environment.

2.4 The Monitoring Process in Gisborne District

Monitoring within the Gisborne District is not comprehensive. There are currently significant aspects of the environment which are not well understood either due to the lack of monitoring performed or because monitoring has not been undertaken for a sufficiently long duration to enable a fuller understanding of the environment to be developed. This is not a problem which is specific to the Gisborne District. However, the Ministry for the Environment is beginning to develop monitoring strategies and undertake the identification of suitable indicators in an attempt to address these inadequacies.

Due to prohibitive time and financial requirements, monitoring every aspect of the plan and the environment is impossible. Therefore, determining what should be monitored and the manner in which data and information is collected is extremely important. With limited resources, it is necessary to monitor the health of a few of the aspects of the environment which are reflective or representative of the wider ecosystem.

The type of data gathered and the manner in which this data collection is performed has a direct influence on its effectiveness and usefulness.

Generally, monitoring will involve the use of indicator species or environmental parameters (such as contaminants in water, or change in vegetative cover) to gather information. The selection of these species or parameters must therefore be performed with care. Similarly, not every resource consent can be comprehensively monitored to ensure compliance or measure impact effects. However, some monitoring of methods of implementation used in the plan is necessary, not only as an aspect of enforcement, but also as a means to determine the appropriateness and success of the Plan itself.

Any provisions to monitor the effectiveness of the plan as a means of achieving the objectives and policies will be located in the monitoring strategy. The strategy would include requirements for performance, compliance, impact, and state of the environment monitoring

2.5 The Role of the Community

Members of the community often possess a knowledge of the area and have the ability to contribute to monitoring in a range of ways. As the public are often closely associated with activities in the environment, or are frequently the first to be impacted by adverse effects of any activities, they are in a unique position to contribute monitoring information. Compliance monitoring is assisted by members of the community in the form of complaints. Feedback in any form from the public contributes significantly to the sustainable management of natural and physical resources.

Information obtained from community surveys are also important indicators in determining how well the relevant authority is exercising and performing its functions, powers and duties under the Act. Community surveys or other forms of feedback to Council also indicate the effectiveness of the plan or identify the emergence of new issues, both of which are important for performance monitoring.

The potential role of the community in state of the environment monitoring has yet to be realised. Other countries, for example the United States, are beginning to establish community based environmental monitoring programmes to assist in the collection of data for monitoring purposes. Members of the public have the opportunity to be involved in gathering data by measuring identified indicators. In some cases the community has also suggested changes to the monitoring programmes as appropriate. This type of monitoring programme has not yet been established within Gisborne District but is a possible aspect which should be explored in future. This type of involvement of the community could be as one expression of *kaitiakitanga* which has been identified as a matter which should be given particular regard to by all people exercising functions and powers under the Act.

2.6 Procedures to Review Plan

A plan that is not relevant to the region for which it is written, or is outdated will not be capable of effectively managing the natural and physical resources of that area in a sustainable manner. As the region continually evolves and develops, these changes need to be acknowledged and appropriately addressed to ensure that the plan remains a dynamic and relevant document. While there is a requirement that the Plan is reviewed at least every ten years, many changes may occur over this time. These changes will be detected through performance monitoring or identified as new research is performed. Feedback from other forms of monitoring such as compliance, impact or state of the environment monitoring also assists in identifying how the Plan should be amended. All this information would be effectively wasted if the Plan was not assessed in response to new information and altered accordingly. A more effective and efficient plan should evolve as changes are made to the document as a result of performance monitoring.

Because of the need to alter the plan in addition to the statutory requirement to review the plan at least every ten years, variations will be performed as required and in response to the results of monitoring. These variations will be performed through the formal process outlined in the First Schedule to the Act, allowing the public opportunity to have input into, and to scrutinise these changes.

2.7 Conclusion

Developing a monitoring programme under the Act must involve identification of areas of monitoring information which are deficient or absent and subsequently developing and implementing new monitoring programmes which will address the current deficits. Current monitoring programmes should be continued, and expanded and refined where necessary. Monitoring will require a considerable amount of staffing and budgetary provision in order to identify, prioritize, develop and implement the necessary programmes. Allocation of resources to achieve an effective monitoring programme will be addressed through the Annual Plan. In order to work within the financial constraints imposed, the types of data gathered and the methods of data acquisition will be carefully considered so that the most effective monitoring programme possible may be developed within the limits of the opportunities and resource available.

2.8 Issues

- 2.8.1 Insufficient monitoring currently undertaken to comprehensively evaluate the state of the environment, plan effectiveness and efficiency, compliance with resource consent conditions and impact of activities on the environment.
- 2.8.2 Lack of information on monitoring in a form which is available to the public.

2.9 Objectives

1. Maintenance and enhancement of the environment of Gisborne District.
2. Efficient and effective monitoring of the environment of Gisborne District.

Principal reasons (1 and 2). The aim of monitoring is to maintain or enhance the current state of the environment of Gisborne District. In order to overcome the problem of inadequate or unco-ordinated monitoring procedures, a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to monitoring of resources and resource use will be required.

2.10 Policies

1. Develop and implement monitoring procedures for the state of the environment of Gisborne District in consultation with the community, tangata whenua and interested parties.
2. Develop and implement monitoring procedures for plan effectiveness and efficiency in consultation with the community, tangata whenua and interested parties.
3. Develop and implement monitoring procedures for compliance with resource consents and impact of development in consultation with the community, tangata whenua and interested parties.
4. Develop and implement procedures for recording and dispersing monitoring information in consultation with the community, tangata whenua and interested parties.

Explanation: (1-4) Currently the District Council undertakes a variety of monitoring processes which go some way to meeting the requirements of the Act. There are other aspects of monitoring which require new processes to be developed including the identification of relevant environmental indicators. Monitoring will need to be comprehensive and integrated in order to provide relevant data for the assessment of plans and to be made available to the public and shared with other agencies.

Plans will need to be altered over time as the needs of the environment and the community change. Adequate monitoring is essential to ensure that any inappropriate plan contents are identified.

Principal reason (1-4): Section 35 of the Act.

2.11 METHODS OF IMPLEMENTATION

1. The development of a Monitoring Strategy by 30 September 2000 in consultation with the community, tangata whenua and interested parties. The Monitoring Strategy will incorporate procedures for monitoring the state of the environment, plan effectiveness and efficiency, compliance with resource consents and the impact of development and the recording and dispersing of monitoring information.

Principal reason (1): Section 35 of the Act.